

MR+A-7-Castle

A 9

January 12, 1953

AEC 597/8

COPY NO. 12

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

OPERATION CASTLE - USE OF BIKINI

Note by the Secretary

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1. At Meeting 748 on September 12, 1952, after discussion of the use of Bikini in Operation CASTLE, the Commission:

a. Approved the use of Bikini for Operation CASTLE on the basis of minimum possible expenditure in FY 1953;

* * * * *

d. Noted that the appropriate authorities in the Department of Interior and the MLC would be notified of this action by appropriate letter.

2. Attached for the information of the Commission are letters dispatched to the Department of Interior in compliance with the action in d above.

3. The letter of notification to the MLC was circulated in AEC 597.

ROY B. SNAPP

Secretary

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CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED	
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC	
R. E. O'Brien	11/21/85
REVIEWED BY	DATE
J. Diaz	1/22/86
REVIEWED BY	DATE

By: P.M. Sweetman 6/10/86

1-13-53
Ref. Sheet filed:
MR+A-7-1-Procuring Records

1-12-53

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[REDACTED]

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 6, 1953

Mr. James P. Davis, Director
Office of Territories
Department of Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Davis:

In our letter of September 12, 1952, we indicated that it was necessary to maintain our reservation of Bikini for possible use and that we planned to send a small party there about October 1, 1952, to establish basic topographic control points in case future developments required activation of that atoll as a supplementary site.

Events since the writing of our last letter have indicated that we must indeed establish such a site at Bikini. We are now therefore formally confirming the fact that the Atomic Energy Commission will have a requirement to use Bikini Atoll, in addition to Eniwetok Atoll, for an indefinite period as an operational testing site for atomic weapons.

We request your concurrence in this use of these lands.

As a result of correspondence and conferences with the Navy Department we understand there is a possibility that the former native inhabitants of Bikini and Eniwetok may have some land rights in these atolls. Understanding that discussions are underway between the Departments of Navy and Interior as to which agency will adjust such rights, we will look to whichever agency it is agreed will do this work to adjust claims against lands used by the Atomic Energy Commission. The Atomic Energy Commission, of course, understands that the Interior Department will administer the trust territory government in these atolls and exercise surveillance over the former native populations.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Henry D. Smyth

Department of Energy
Historian's Office
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[REDACTED]

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 12, 1952

Dear Mr. Davis:

The Commission has considered the question of the disposition of Bikini Atoll which you, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Sady raised at a meeting in my office on April 17, 1952. We have also considered the results of aerial and map surveys of the several alternate locations suggested in your letter of June 2, 1952.

Our first concern, you will recall, was to determine whether or not Bikini was inhabitable from a radiological safety point of view, but a closely allied problem was that of retaining, as an alternate site capability, a location which satisfies several operational requirements. These requirements are that the site:

(1) Have sufficient land area to accommodate the scientific tests, a small operating base, a camp for workers, and a C-47 air strip.

(2) Have a navigable harbor sufficiently deep to accommodate ocean-going ships.

(3) Be within reasonable supporting distance of the home base at Eniwetok.

(4) Be far enough removed from inhabited areas so that inhabitants are not endangered by the scientific tests.

Our examination of all the land areas involved reveals that, while Bikini is in all probability quite inhabitable from the radiological point of view, it is the one of all the land areas involved which most nearly satisfies our requirements for a possible supplementary site. We feel it is necessary, therefore, to maintain our present position relative to Bikini. This means, of course, that the natives now living on Kili cannot be moved there. If the requirement still exists to move these natives, the Atomic Energy Commission will be glad to assist you toward that end, if you desire, by testifying where necessary to the effect that our operational requirements for Bikini prevent moving them there.

To establish basic topographical survey control points in case future developments require activation of Bikini as a supplementary site, we plan to send a small party there about October 1, 1952.

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We are informing you of our tentative conclusions and proposed action at this time in accordance with our letter of July 7* in order that you may assess the implications thereof. We will, of course, keep you informed of future developments in this connection.

Sincerely yours,

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Gordon Dean
Chairman

Department of Energy
Historian's Office
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Mr. James P. Davis, Director
Office of Territories
Department of Interior
Washington, D. C.

*On file in Division of Military Application.